CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND THIRTY-NINTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva
on Thursday, 27 January 2000, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Mr. Harald Kreid (Austria)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 839th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

I have on my list of speakers for today the representatives of Malaysia, who will be speaking on behalf of the Group of 21, and of China. I first give the floor to the representative of Malaysia, Ambassador Hamidon Ali. Ambassador, you have the floor.

Mr. HAMIDON (Malaysia): Mr. President, as this is the first time that I am taking the floor at this present session, I would like to express our congratulations to you on your assumption of the presidency of this Conference. We, the Malaysian delegation, are delighted to see you in the Chair and will give you our support and cooperation in your efforts to make some headway in the rather difficult task that lies in front of us.

I am, as you have stated, making a statement on behalf of the Group of 21. The Group of 21 expresses its satisfaction that the Conference has adopted its agenda for the 2000 session. This session of the CD commences its work against a backdrop of serious and multifarious challenges facing the international community in the field of disarmament, non-proliferation in all its aspects, and international security, particularly the attempts to justify the perspective of indefinite possession of nuclear arsenals and related concepts of nuclear deterrence.

The Group stresses that as the single multilateral negotiating forum in disarmament, the CD's programme of work should be responsive to these challenges, to the interests and priorities of all its members and to the aspirations of the international community in the field of disarmament, non-proliferation in all its aspects, and international peace and security. The Group expresses its concern that the Conference on Disarmament was unable to undertake substantive work on the basis of an agreed programme of work in 1999, in spite of the flexibility shown by the Group in regard to a number of formal and informal proposals that were made during the course of that session. The Group reaffirms its readiness to participate constructively in all efforts aimed at reaching agreement on a programme of work which is comprehensive and balanced.

In this context, the Group reaffirms its proposals contained in CD/1570 on the programme of work and CD/1571 on a draft decision and mandate for the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament.

The Group emphasizes that nuclear disarmament is the highest priority for the Conference on Disarmament. It stresses the importance of the elimination of the possibility of nuclear war, the threats to humanity derived from the continued existence of nuclear weapons and the possible use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. It underscores the need to accomplish the total elimination of nuclear weapons and emphasizes, in this regard, the urgent need to commence negotiations without delay.

(Mr. Hamidon, Malaysia)

The Group has already expressed, in document CD/1549 of 12 August 1998, its position with regard to the establishment of an ad hoc committee under agenda item 1, entitled "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament", to negotiate on the basis of the report of the Special Coordinator contained in CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

The prevention of an arms race in outer space has assumed greater urgency because of legitimate concerns that existing legal instruments are inadequate to deter imminent attempts for the further militarization of outer space. In accordance with United Nations General Assembly resolution 54/53, the Group emphasizes the urgent need for commencement of substantive work on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. In this connection, the Group calls upon the States parties to the ABM Treaty to fully comply with its provisions.

While various approaches exist, the Group expresses its conviction that efforts for the conclusion of a universal and legally binding instrument on security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States should be pursued.

The Group hopes that the Conference will commence early substantive work during the 2000 annual session and to this end reaffirms its readiness to participate constructively in all efforts aimed at reaching agreement on the programme of work. The Group urges other groups to display matching flexibility and calls upon the President of the Conference to intensify efforts aimed at finding agreement on a programme of work, so that substantive work of the Conference can commence without delay in accordance with the rules of procedure.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Malaysia for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of China, Ambassador Hu Xiaodi. Ambassador, you have the floor.

Mr. HU (China) (translated from Chinese): Mr. President, at the outset please allow me to congratulate you on your assumption of office as the first President of this year's session of the Conference on Disarmament. Mankind has entered a new year, new century and new millennium. I hope that with your rich diplomatic experience you will steer the Conference through a good beginning, laying down a solid foundation for future work. Meanwhile, I would like to thank your predecessor the outgoing President, distinguished Ambassador Luck of Australia, for conducting extensive inter-sessional consultations that greatly benefited all of us. I would also avail myself of this opportunity to express my gratitude to the CD Secretary-General, Mr. Petrovsky, the Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Bensmail, and all my colleagues in this room. It is my intention to maintain friendly cooperation in all aspects between the Chinese delegation and you all.

On 9 and 10 December President Jiang Zemin of China and President BorisYeltsin held their second informal summit, conducting an in-depth exchange of views on issues of common interest and issuing a joint statement elaborating on, inter alia, the world situation, the role of the United Nations and international security, arms control and disarmament. The important

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principles, positions and policies contained in this document will guide my delegation's work in the Conference on Disarmament. Together with the delegation of the Russian Federation, we have requested the circulation of this joint statement as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament.

The new century and new millennium increase our hopes for a brighter future. The Chinese people, together with all other peoples of the world, are striving to realize the goals of peace, security and development. It should be pointed out that what we need is lasting peace, universal security and common development world-wide, not just for a single State or a group of States. The bitter experiences of the two world wars in the last century told us that, in order to reach these goals, all nations must join efforts to advance the arms control and disarmament process in a just, reasonable and comprehensive way. In retrospect, we can see that all the peace-loving nations and people have made unremitting efforts to this end and have achieved great things.

While we are looking to the future with great hope, a series of negative developments in the world today cannot but make us realize that the situation is grave and the task is arduous. In the global context, the cold-war mentality is still present, not to say renascent. Hegemony and power politics are on the rise. Wanton interference in other countries' internal affairs is becoming extreme. Large-scale military force has been used in international relations without the authorization of the United Nations. The gigantic military bloc, instead of fading away, is growing and gaining in strength; a certain country, for its own benefit and in disregard of the demands and appeals of General Assembly resolutions passed year after year, applies expediency and double standards to existing arms control and disarmament agreements, even trying to weaken or abolish the relevant treaty so as to keep the door open for its energetic research, development and proliferation of advanced missile defence systems which undermine the strategic balance and stability. The CTBT has been trampled on and faces an unknown future, one of the reasons given being that it is "insufficient to ensure perpetual supremacy in nuclear weapons". More and more sophisticated weapons keep emerging. Information warfare and space warfare have become the idiom of the military personnel of the super-Power.

All these developments in so short a period of time are extremely worrisome. People cannot but ask: is the objective common security for all States or absolute security enjoyed by a single State at the expense of all others? Is it still to guard against the proliferation of nuclear weapons and to pursue arms control and disarmament, including nuclear disarmament? These developments have undermined confidence and security perceptions among States, pose serious threats to the achievements already made in arms control and disarmament, and inevitably have a destructive influence on our future work. We think that international arms control and the disarmament process have reached a crucial crossroads.

Undoubtedly, we are faced with both opportunities and serious challenges. As the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating body, the Conference on Disarmament has an indispensable role to play in safeguarding world peace and security. Under the present circumstances, what should the CD do? The correct approach is neither to shy away from difficulties nor to bypass

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contradictions. On the contrary, the CD should face up to reality and confront its difficulties, focusing on the major substantive issues that have a bearing on international peace and security and addressing all the interrelated key issues on its agenda in a comprehensive and balanced way.

Specifically, the demands that last year's General Assembly resolutions made upon the CD should guide us in formulating our programme of work this year, because they reflect the widely shared expectations of the international community and highlight important and urgent issues in the field of arms control and disarmament. The General Assembly resolutions reiterate that the CD has the lead role in negotiating a multilateral agreement or agreements on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, and invites the CD to establish an ad hoc committee as early as possible during its 2000 session. They call upon the CD to establish on a priority basis an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament to commence negotiations early in 2000 on a phased programme of nuclear disarmament and the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons. They also call upon the CD to negotiate and conclude a fissile material cut-off treaty as early as possible on the basis of the 1995 report by the Special Coordinator and the mandate contained therein. They recommend that the CD actively continue intensive negotiations with a view to reaching early agreement on effective international safeguards for non-nuclear weapon States. They request the CD to commence negotiations on an international convention prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. These requirements are set forth respectively in resolutions A/RES/54/52, 53, 54 (D) and 54 (P).

What we should do now is to conduct earnest and serious work in accordance with the General Assembly's demands. As far as China is concerned, the prevention of an arms race in outer space, including the prohibition of outer space weapons and anti-ballistic missile systems which undermine strategic stability, is a top priority. The negative developments in this field have stalled the nuclear disarmament process and undermined the basis for non-proliferation. The Chinese delegation maintains that the CD should re-establish an ad hoc committee on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, pursuant to the wording set forth in document CD/1576, and commence negotiations on the prohibition of the testing, deployment and use of weapons, weapon systems and their components in outer space. Having presented our views on outer space and missile defence issues on many other occasions, we will further expound our positions and proposals in this regard. The Chinese delegation is also in favour of commencing serious multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament with a view to achieving the objective of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons at an early date. This is the request of the times. Addressing the United Nations General Assembly in 1994, Mr. Qian Qichen, Vice-Premier and at the time Foreign Minister of China, pointed out that, as mankind had been capable of inventing nuclear weapons in the twentieth century, it was entirely capable of banning and thoroughly destroying such weapons in the twenty-first. Now the twenty-first century has arrived, let us make earnest efforts to honour our commitment and realize that goal.

The Chinese delegation sincerely hopes that, as the new year begins, all the CD members will demonstrate a fresh will to promote real disarmament, fully take into consideration the concerns and proposals of the various parties, and genuinely live up to the universal aspirations

(Mr. Hu, China)

of the international community as reflected in the relevant United Nations General Assembly resolutions, so that an early agreement can be reached to address all the important issues in a comprehensive and balanced way. On this basis, we can work out a good programme of work and make joint efforts to achieve the primary objective of nuclear disarmament, as well as other benchmarks in arms control and disarmament in the twenty-first century.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of China for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. This concludes my list of speakers for today. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? That does not seem to be the case.

I should therefore now like to take up for a decision the requests of Kuwait and Moldova to participate as observers in the work of the Conference during this session without having first considered them in an informal plenary. These requests are contained in document CD/WP.507, which is before you. May I take it that the Conference can agree to these requests?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: This concludes our business for today. Does any other delegation want to take the floor at this stage? I recognize the representative of Switzerland. Ambassador Hofer, you have the floor.

Mr. HOFER (Switzerland): I would just like to draw the attention of delegates to the fact that the Swiss Foreign Minister and Federal Councillor, Joseph Deiss, will address the Biological Weapons Ad Hoc Group this coming Monday, 31 January, at around 11.30 a.m.

The PRESIDENT: Thank you for the announcement, Ambassador Hofer.

Before we conclude for today, I just want to make some brief remarks. Delegations are aware, through the reports they have undoubtedly received from the Group Coordinators, of the state of affairs, that is, of the situation we are in concerning the efforts undertaken by the presidency to reach agreement on the texts which I have submitted to you. These efforts have not achieved a unanimous positive response. In this Conference - I do not have to point this out - if you have 95 per cent adherence, it may be gratifying, but it does not help you. You need 100 per cent. My efforts in the next days will be dedicated to where the 100 per cent go and it will be up to you to judge what chances I have to arrive at this goal, which has eluded some of my predecessors as well. But it should not be for want of effort and dedication on my part.

The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 3 February, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 10.45 a.m.